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MY FAITH

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(Written for a young American friend)

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"*Truly righteous* is he who believes in Allah and the Last Day and the angels and the Book and Prophets and spends his money for love of Him, on the kindred and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer and those who ask for charity, and for ransoming the captives; and who observes Prayer and pays the *Zakat* and those who fulfil their promise when they have made one, and the patient in poverty and afflictions and the steadfast in time of war; it is these who have proved truthful and it is these who are the God-fearing."

The Holy Quran
(*Al-Baqara*: 178)

"*Faith* is that thou believe in Allah and His angels and in meeting with Him and in His Messengers and that thou believe in being raised to life after death."

"*Islam* is that thou shalt worship Allah and not associate aught with Him and that thou keep up prayer and pay the *Zakat* as ordained and fast in Ramadhan."

(*The Holy Prophet*)

SIR MUHAMMAD ZAFRULLAH KHAN

MY FAITH

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Raheem

In the name of God, Who has made provision for our fullest development and Who rewards our actions in the best manner.

Islam means the attainment of peace through submission to the Will of God.

I am a Muslim.

i. e., one who believes in Islam, or, one who submits himself to the Will of God.

I believe in God.

God is *One;* He is also *Unity;* all things proceed from Him and depend upon Him for support and sustenance. He needs no support.

He neither begets nor is begotten. He has no partner and no equal.

I believe in God's Angels.

They are the agency through which God communicates with His creatures and they carry out many other functions.

I believe in the Revelations vouchsafed by God from time to time for the guidance of mankind.

The earlier Revelations were limited in their scope and application. They contained guidance for the tribe, nation or people for whom they were revealed. They were suited, and were thus limited, to the stage of d e v e l o p m e n t through which that tribe, nation or people was passing. The final, perfect and universal Revelation is contained in the Holy Quran which is a record of the direct verbal Revelation received by the Holy Proph-

et of Islam, Muhammad, (May Allah's peace and blessings be upon him), for the guidance of all mankind.

I believe in God's Prophets.

In *all* of them, e. g. Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Buddha, Krishna, Muhammad (on all of whom be the peace and blessings of God). Jesus was a righteous Prophet of God and was the last Prophet raised among the Israelites. He was put upon the cross, but did not die on the cross. He was taken down from the cross while still alive (though he was then in a swoon which has subsequently been mistaken for death) and was lovingly cared for and ministered unto and revived and recovered his strength. Thereafter he journeyed through Syria, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, and Kashmir, preaching to the scattered tribes of Israel in

those lands. He died in Kashmir and is buried in Srinagar, where his tomb is still preserved and may be visited.

The final, perfect and universal Revelation having been vouchsafed through the Holy Prophet Muhammad, he was thus the *Last Law-bearing Prophet.* But mankind is apt to stray from the path of righteousness and Divine Revelation is needed in the form of guidance and as furnishing the correct interpretation of the Holy Quran from epoch to epoch. It is also necessary that, as the pattern of human life develops, mankind should have a living example set before them of a life utterly pure and devoted to the service of God and man. For this limited purpose Prophets will continue to arise.

Ahmad of Qadian was such a Prophet. He lived in the latter part of the nineteenth century and early

part of the twentieth century and died in 1908. I believe in him and I am thus an Ahmadi Muslim.

I believe in the resurrection of the soul and the life after death.

I believe that God is the fountain-head of all goodness and beneficence and that the standard and measure of everything is determined by Him.

Islam teaches that the object of man's existence is to seek union with God through the cultivation of divine attributes in himself.

For this purpose man has been endowed with appropriate capacities and faculties.

The right and proper use of these capacities and faculties promotes beneficient development and leads to the state known as salvation.

The misuse and abuse of these capacities and faculties results in stultification and renders a person unfit for the state known as salvation till the stultification has been purged and healthy development takes place.

All men are born "pure." Evil comes from outside as the result of conscious action (which includes thought) or reprehensible omission.

Each of us must work out his own salvation through his own efforts seeking and winning the Grace, Mercy and Love of God. No other person can be our atonement.

Every act performed within its proper sphere and with a good motive is "good."

Every act performed outside its appropriate sphere or with an improper motive is "evil."

Prayer is a very potent and is the principal means of approach to God. Other means are physical and moral discipline, which include fasting, charity, benevolence, helpfulness, tolerance, etc.

God is absolute Purity and we can approach Him only by becoming pure ourselves in body, mind and spirit; in thought and in action.

Purity of body is as essential as purity of mind and spirit.

The care of our bodies, which are the containers of our minds and souls, is a sacred trust and should be scrupulously discharged.

Islam prescribes frequent baths and ablutions and lays down other regulations for the promotion of personal and general cleanliness, which not only have the effect of fostering physical well-being but

predispose a person towards good behavior in all respects.

Food affects one's health and also one's mind and thoughts. Care must, therefore, be taken that our food is pure and wholesome. Islam gives directions in that respect and also enjoins moderation. It prohibits the use of liquor and all intoxicants.

Islam gives directions regarding and sets up standards of good conduct. It forbids every kind of injury to or trespass against our fellow-beings, and also such conduct as, though not constituting a trespass, would jar upon the feelings of others. It forbids evil thoughts and designs.

It enjoins beneficient conduct towards others, irrespective of whether others act beneficiently towards one or not. It teaches that beneficence towards human beings

should flow out of one as naturally as affection flows out towards parents, brothers and sisters.

We are exhorted to cultivate faith, courage and steadfastness and constantly to practice charity, forgiveness and love.

In the economic sphere Islam seeks to bring about the widest and most equitable distribution of wealth. It teaches that the ultimate sources of all wealth, the earth and its treasures, the sun, the moon, the stars, the winds that blow, the clouds that bring rain, are the gifts of God to *all* mankind. In the distribution of wealth, therefore, it directs that the share of the community, as such, should also be set apart and utilized for the advancement of the community as a whole. This share is recoverable in the form of a levy called the Zakat (which means both purification

and fostering). The proceeds of Zakat are to be devoted towards specific objects, e.g. relief of poverty and distress, public works, the benefits of which can be shared by all sections of the community, scientific and industrial research, stipends for scholars and research workers, the provision of capital for those who possess the necessary talent but lack the capital, etc.

Islam recognizes and safeguards private ownership, but treats all ownership as in the nature of trust. Through its system of inheritance it seeks to secure wide distribution of wealth in each generation. By prohibiting the lending of money on interest and the levying of Zakat it counteracts the accumulation of wealth within limited circles. It seeks to promote commerce and industry through private enterprise, co-partnership, profit

sharing and joint stock corporations.

Islam makes it obligatory upon the State to secure an adequate minimum of the necessaries of life for all its citizens.

In the social sphere it inculcates the brotherhood and equality of man. It recognizes no division or privilege based on race, color, family or wealth. The only badge of honor and nobility in Islam is the purity and righteousness of a man's life.

The Holy Quran says:—

يَاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اِنَّا خَلَقْنٰكُمْ مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ وَّاُنْثٰى
وَجَعَلْنٰكُمْ شُعُوْبًا وَّ قَبَآئِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوْا
اِنَّ اَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ اَتْقٰكُمْ

"O, people! We have divided you into tribes and nations for greater facility of intercourse; the most honored of you before God is he who leads the most righteous life." (*Hujurāt* :13)

Islam teaches the widest tolerance in the religious sphere and inculcates the respect for the beliefs and faiths of those who differ with us.

The Holy Quran says:—

لَآ إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ قَد تَّبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ

"There shall be no compulsion in matters of faith; guidance has ben made manifest from error."

(*Al-Imran* :256)

Whenever you feel lonely, weary or discouraged, turn towards God for companionship, comfort and help. He is ever near and will not fail you.

Make your heart His shrine and temple and let Him ever dwell in it in sweet guardianship and companionship.

Always stand up for truth, righteousness, fair dealing and justice.

Stand with God, though you may have to stand against the whole world.

The love and fear of God are the sum of all wisdom.

May God bless you and keep you, and always smile on you.

For further information on Islam
write to:

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